

Others and the Japanese Religions

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Emmanuel Levinas

We think that an idea of infiniteness inside me, or my relationship with God, comes to me through my concrete relationships with other humans or a social relationship of my responsibility to my neighbors. I do not get it because of some experience, but the face of others speaks of the unknown commandment through its otherness or its strangeness⁽¹⁾.

Kitaro Nishida

“When it is thought that *the self sees the self in the self*, together with it being thought that the self sees *the absolute other* in the self, it must mean that that *absolute other* is precisely the self”. “At the basis of our world and the things which can be thought, there is a foundation laid through a kind of personal awareness, namely that we thus see the absolute other at the bottom of the self, and vice versa *see the self in the absolute other*”⁽²⁾.

1. Otherness

Now I appreciate here many steps of **otherness** in front of me. Geographically Asia has an otherness over against the world, East Asia over against Asia, Japan o.a. East Asia and I o.a. Japan. I as a human have an otherness o.a. other creatures, as a man o.a. woman, as a husband o.a. a wife, as a father o.a. children. As a teacher o.a. students, as a citizen o.a. government, as a consumer

(1) E. Levinas, *De dieu qui vient à l'idée*, Librairie philosophique, J. Vrin, 1986, p. 11

(2) K. Nishida, *I and Thing*, (1932), *Works VI*, Iwanami-shoten, 1948, p. 386, p. 405.

o.a. producers. Religiously I stand as a Protestant o.a. other religious believers. Surely I am talking here with feeling various **otherness** before my “over against”, whose complex entanglement gives me the identity of what I am.

Japan and religion are two focuses of my speech today about **otherness**. This is because the Japanese fascism during the Pacific War was actually, in my opinion, a religious fascism that was seriously lacking in the sense of **otherness**. A Japanese scholar, who studies social theory, if he or she is honest, should not overlook this fact. This fascism is so-called State-Shinto centered in the worship of the Japanese Emperor, oppressing the diversity of thoughts in those days. It also tried to assimilate the neighboring nations as subjects of the Emperor. The purpose of my study hitherto has been devoted to find out the meaning of this problem and trying to overcome it. Thus, against this assimilation, I would like to propose now a public philosophy that enables us to form a public sphere where different ideologies can exist in an equal footing as **otherness** to each other.

The idea of “assimilation” in Japan flows from the oldest layer in Japanese history. Specifically it comes from the Shinto religion based on animism with the worship of Emperor since the ancient time. Thus the critique of this assimilation is just the critique of Japanese religions. This is quite different from the Western case. Because, in Western thought, the idea of assimilation, i.e., eroding everything into the sameness, came from the Greek ontology as Emmanuel Levinas frequently showed. Thus the critique of assimilation is the critique of Greek ontology. In Japan, however, pantheism such as Shinto animism is the origin of assimilation. Both in the West and in Japan the assimilation thought developed into dangerous issues when it was united with political power. The religions in Japan that came from foreign countries, especially Buddhism and Christianity, have exhibited an essentially strong **otherness** to this pantheism, but sometimes they have been eroded in an inclusive way or absorbed softly, i.e., assimilated to this pantheism. My intention is not to reject Shinto, but to let it co-exist as a religion with other religions in Japan. How to form this kind of society is not so an easy task.

Let us begin with a concrete public illustration.

Recently Jyun-ichiro Koizumi visited and worshiped at Yasukuni Shrine in his formal role as the Prime Minister. It has been done three times, namely on August 13 in 2001, on April 21 in 2002 and on January 14 in 2003. The so-called **public worship** at Yasukuni Shrine by the Prime Minister has been controversial for a long time in Japan, because it inevitably has had a religio-political meaning. Yasukuni Shrine was originally founded by the state in the time of Meiji government for consecration of the spirits of dead soldiers. The Emperor and the governmental officers worshiped this Shrine regularly. Thus being consecrated here was thought highly honored among the nation before the World War II. This Shrine was a religio-political symbol of Japanese Nation State that gave justification to the modern Japanese wars.

After the War, this Shrine was separated from the state, because, first of all, the new Japanese constitution declares the separation of shrine (church) and state, and, furthermore, the peace-wish among the nation was strong. For several political reasons, starting towards the end of the 60's, the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) and conservative people wanted Yasukuni Shrine to be again controlled by the government. Although they did not succeed in this policy directly, being faced with strong objections, mainly from religious groups, they tried to find another indirect solution in the form of the **public worship** by the governmental officers.

This **public worship** by the Prime Minister Koizumi has encountered a strong objection not only from the religious and the liberal camps, but also from Korea and China and other Asian countries because this Shrine is sacred to the A-class war criminals in the Pacific War. Actually this Koizumi's action is reacted with the lawsuit to the courts by many citizens including Korean people. In his action the foreign critics are alarmed at the possibilities of a return to militarism in Japan. Historically, by exploiting the religiosity of ancestor worship, Yasukuni Shrine was consecrated to the dead spirits of the people who fought for the Emperor and therefore was placed in the center of the Japanese Empire in religio-political sense. It can be said that this Shrine was the central political ideology of assimilation to the subjects of the Emperor, but has been camouflaged by the Japanese "culture", that is to say, the

pantheistic religiosity. Even today, this Shrine is also physically and literally at the center of Tokyo, next to the Imperial Palace, and thus at the physical as well as symbolic center of Japan.

To get rid of the foreign criticism, the Japanese government at last began to inquire into an alternative to Yasukuni Shrine, and finally, on December 25 in 2002, has presented a report that says the need of National Memorial Monument for Peace (NMMP) instead of Yasukuni Shrine. Many people think that the government should start to construct this NMMP in order for the governmental officers to stop the **public worship** to Yasukuni Shrine. They should use this NMMP for remembering the wars in the modern Japan with intention for making a world peace. Different religious groups also can use in their prayers for world peace.

But, surprisingly enough, two different extreme camps soon began to object to this plan.

- (1) The Prime Minister Koizumi and groups promoting Yasukuni Shrine.
- (2) Some liberals. And Christians and Buddhists who have hitherto strongly objected the governmental **public worship**.

What surprised me is not the objection from (1) but from (2), because I had thought it quite natural that the group (2) would welcome the alternative to Yasukuni Shrine. This reaction impresses on me a serious issue in public philosophy in Japan, concerning **otherness**. The group (1) is a kind of communitarianism rooted in an ethnic mind, wishing to govern people by emphasizing the Emperor. They do not like that Yasukuni Shrine would be eclipsed by the construction of a new NMMP. The mental situation of group (2) is rather complicated. It seems that group (2), reacting strongly to group (1), is pushed to the position of “libertarians”. The Christians and Buddhists in objection to group (1) are forced to become very individualistic in their faiths. They are inclined to think the government to be evil at any time. Remembering the people who died in the wars is a personal problem in their opinions and, therefore, not a governmental problem. Construction of a new NMMP by the government is merely preparation to open the way to the next war, or to a militaristic Japan.

These two different opinions are two extremes and, in my opinion, devoid of the sense of **others**.

Group (1) sticks to Shinto animism sponsored by the government and has no care about **other** religious people and liberals.

Group (2) sticks to their individual faiths or life styles and have no care about **others**, without preparing a common place of remembering the wars. The wars are not personal events and, therefore, need a public forum to think about them. Many groups in civil society should try to form public opinions to this problem in their own manners. What is the state? What is patriotism? What is religion? What is war? How do we think about these problems as our responsibilities among different others?

2. “Absolute others” and Kitaro Nishida

First I think a philosophical framework and next the historical context. It is possible to link Nishida’s theory of awareness to the theory of self and **other**. This is because he is clearly discussing “absolute otherness as the self’s foundation”⁽³⁾.

In such documents as his 1932 essay “I and Thou”, Nishida developed his view of “absolute otherness” so as to produce the following types of self-understanding: “When it is thought that *the self sees the self in the self*, together with it being thought that the self sees *the absolute other* in the self, it must mean that that *absolute other* is precisely the self.” “At the basis of our world and the things which can be thought, there is a foundation laid through a kind of personal awareness, namely that we thus see the absolute other at the bottom of the self, and vice versa *see the self in the absolute other*”.

The expression “the self sees the self in the self” can be understood simply as a tautology. However, this expression expresses the structure of awareness in Nishida Philosophy. It is not simply a tautology. For Nishida — who rejects as objectifying logic (Aristotelian logic) the kind of logic which views the self

(3) H. Inagaki & N. Jennings, *Philosophical Theology and East-West Dialogue*, Rodopi, Amsterdam-Atlanta, 2000, pp. 38–46.

objectively — it is the origin of ‘*topos*-like’ logic that seeks to grasp the self from within the self. Here when saying “X sees Z in Y,” even though X, Y and Z are the same word ‘self’, X = ‘I’, Y = ‘the *topos* of absolute nothingness’, and Z = ‘the true self’. In other words, “I see the true self in the *topos* of absolute nothingness.” However, in the essay “I and Thou,” Y is not ‘the *topos* of absolute nothingness,’ but has been changed to ‘absolute other’. The statement is therefore “I see the true self in the *absolute other*.” This is a scheme of human self-understanding in contact with the religious root, i.e., Zen-Buddhism, in the case of Nishida.

“I see the true self in the *absolute other*” is the expression of a highly condensed self-understanding. However, it is not necessarily only the religious person or speculative religious philosopher who achieves this kind of awareness. In fact, anyone has this kind of structure of identity intrinsically in his self-understanding. Even if one is not particularly aware of it, a normal person has within his personality a certain coherence of otherness that ought to be operative in everyday life. Usually this otherness may be a conscience within a normal adult, which allows him/her to see himself/herself, so to say, objectively.

Among modern Western philosophers, Levinas speaks something similar to the enlightenment in Zen, after referring to “la responsabilite pour autrui” as follows. “Otherness is what introduces the assimilation into self’s deepest place, which is the heteronomy of freedom that the Greeks did not teach us. It is just the transcendent in the immanent that the ego is not embedded in a tissue of states of affairs of consciousness. At the same time, the states of affairs are not becoming rigid even in the immanent”⁽⁴⁾.

Next, let us turn to our eyes in the history of Japanese Buddhism as an illustration on the “absolute other” against Japanese basic animistic Shinto worldview.

3. Kamakura Buddhism

Japan began to establish its identity in 5th–6th century when Great thought

(4) E. Levinas, *De dieu qui vient a l’idee*, p. 48.

such as Buddhism and Confucianism came from China through Korea. Japanese people, at the same time, realized their own animistic religion centered in ancestor worship, i.e., Shinto. Shotoku-taishi noticed deeply the meaning of salvation and otherness of Buddhism. But actually the animistic religion including Emperor-worship became the basic worldview and identity of the Japanese people, which eroded Buddhism in inclusive way. Buddhism lost its true otherness from 6th to 12th century in Japan. In 13th century, there came Reformation in Japanese Buddhism that Daisetsu Suzuki called “Japanese Spirituality.” Here the idea of “absolute other” is clearly seen.

Before 13th century, Buddhism (Mahayana-Buddhism) in Japan functioned only as a magical and liturgical protection of the noble class or ruling power, and had the status of the state religion. The Samurai class rose up in the 11th century and established a ruling government in Kamakura, in the eastern part of Japan, in the end of 12th century. The Samurai people were originally soldiers, protecting the noble class, who were always prepared to die for their lords. They lived by the side of death and, therefore, thought sincerely about the meaning of life and death in their daily lives. They needed salvation in a personal sense. The Reformation of Buddhism was thus welcomed both by this Samurai class and ordinary people like farmers or merchants.

The nature of this renewal of Buddhism will be summarized as follows⁽⁵⁾.

- (1) Liberation from magical and esoteric elements in the old Buddhism.
- (2) Focusing on such existential problems as living and dying.
- (3) Setting up a clear purpose of personal life.
- (4) Orienting human behavior towards this purpose.
- (5) Infusing dynamism into hitherto routine daily life.

These new elements in Reformation developed side by side with the decline of the old establishment ruled by noble clans for nearly five hundred years.

Among Reformers Shinran (1173–1262), Dogen (1200–53) and Nichiren (1222–82) were important. Shinran excelled in an inner purity and a religious

(5) H. Inagaki, *Person, Society, and Religions, Exchange*, vol. 31, No. 2, 2003, Brill, Leiden-Boston.

emotion through tough commitment to the absolute other, Amida-Buddha (personal *tathagata*). Dogen pursued a penetrating philosophical logic along with physical training through practical faith. Nichiren was distinguished by his prophetic will and his action through the Scriptural faith, as a practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra*.

By responding to the absolute grace of salvation, Shinran's thorough obedience to Amida without dependence on legal commandments, has been compared with *sola fide* by Martin Luther. Contemporaneous with St. Francis, a great teaching of salvation by *sola fide* appeared in Japan! (Karl Barth).

Shinran's interpretation of Buddhism and his activity will be summarized in the following three points.

- (1) Doctrine of salvation. Since he realized his sin deeply, he felt the need of dedicating himself to Amida in order to be saved, depending on Amida's gracious mercy. His personal religious experience was so existential that he felt the hierarchical order of monks was only a hindrance for the purpose of salvation.
- (2) Believer's community. This community was called the 'brotherhood' and mainly consisted of merchants and peasants. They were taught to repeat 'Nenbutsu', just a simple word to orient their hearts to Amida only, making it unnecessary to worship animistic deities any more.
- (3) Relation to political power. The 'brotherhood' was a voluntary association, independent of any political governors. Shinran taught that his value did not come from earthly authority, but from Amida's mercy, and did not allow believers to resist the governors with armaments.

Dogen was a Zen-master, who studied for a long time in China. His teaching of Zen-Buddhism is, in a sense, quite opposite to Amida-faith, because Buddha's truth, *Dharma*, manifests itself in impersonal reality. After sitting on a floor for a long time and by negating his ego, a man must realize that emptiness is the nature of true reality. True self is thus achieved as nothingness. When he is enlightened by this *Nirvana*, he is liberated from all sufferings and can live everyday calm and peace. The teaching of Zen is well illustrated in the "Ten Bulls."⁽⁶⁾

Nichiren at first belonged to the ‘Nenbutsu’-sect but afterwards criticized and rejected it. He claimed not only the supremacy of the *Lotus Sutra* (*Saddharma-pundarikausutra*) among the many sacred books, but also the way of *bodhisattva*, that is to say, the practice of Buddha’s mercy towards human fellows. The motto of Nichiren was “committing to Buddha’s truth, not to man’s truth”, which meant that human acts should follow the *Lotus Sutra* instead of being influenced by human dependent relationships. Nichiren was distinctive in his political thinking when compared to other Reformers. Since Buddha’s law and the King’s law were balanced in him, he sometimes criticized the Kamakura governor. Owing to that act, he suffered persecution. His idea was that while the governor (state) ruled by good law would flourish, that ruled by evil law would come to ruin.

The following analogy seems to be interesting. While Shinran may be compared with Luther, Nichiren may be compared with Calvin, and perhaps Dogen with Menno Simons. But the story of Shinran’s followers was also somewhat similar to the Calvinists.

After Shinran, in the time of Rennyō (1415–99), the Jyōdo-shinshū sect (True Pure Land sect) often participated in the resistance movements with armaments against the political power. The biggest resistance was in Kaga, where the believers governed by themselves in a democratic way for more than 100 years. Its zenith, and simultaneously its last resistance, was in Ishiyama in 1570. The monks and believers fought for 11 years at the Castle of Ishiyama against Nobunaga Oda, who finally ended the War-Age in Japan (c.1576) and united the country.

It is interesting to notice that Christianity was first brought Japan during this time by a Jesuit monk, Francis Xavier (1549). Further, in Europe, the Huguenot War (1562–98) and the Independence of the Netherlands Republic (1581) took place in this era. The balance of God’s law and King’s law, or the problem of separation of Church and State, was also a big issue there.

(6) H. Inagaki & N. Jennings, *Philosophical Theology and East-West Dialogue*, pp. 38–46.

The reason why I use the term Reformation in order to describe the Buddhist Renaissance is its Religio-social results, with its later aftereffects in Japanese history. First, in Europe, the Reformation began with the problem of a personal salvation and spread among the people at the same time as a social reformation. A similar situation occurred in Japan. Second, although Buddhism was accepted mainly by the ruling class and scholars in Japan, ordinary people were alienated from salvation. But Kamakura Reformers brought the salvation message in a simple way to the ordinary people, even if they lived and worked in this-world; they did not need to throw away jobs to become monks in the temples. To be sure, the monks in the temples sometimes fought against secular governors before the Kamakura era, but these battles were fought merely to defend or acquire secular privileges for themselves. After the Kamakura era, people in general fought in order to protect their own faiths. The fight for protecting their own faiths is seen as a requirement of freedom of conscience, or at least as a bud seeking for modern human right. These situations are parallel to what the teaching of ‘inner-world asceticism’ claimed in the history of European Reformation.

Unfortunately the results of Reformation in Japan did not mature and thus fully generate a civil society. After Nobunaga, any tendency toward religious freedom was cut down by the political power.

Another **otherness** to basic Japanese worldview was Christianity. It was brought into by Francis Xavier in 1549 and soon spread out to Samurai and people in the War-era. It is said that a half million people became Christians for forty years or so. Their values are too different to Japanese and exhibited strong otherness to the basic Japanese worldview. The governors Hideyoshi Toyotomi and Ieyasu Tokugawa reject this otherness and seriously persecuted them.

In 1637, more than thirty thousand Christians at Nagasaki engaged in an armed riot against the Tokugawa Shogunate, with the result that they were all killed. After this riot, neither Buddhism nor Christianity could resist the political power any more. The hope of producing freedom in society evaporated. This was completed with the Sakoku policy (closing Japan’s doors to other countries) by the Tokugawa Shogunate (1639–1868). For more than 200 years the society

appeared peaceful and quiet, but actually any true creative development was not there.

This means that the Buddhist sects were forced to become so-called the state religion for the purpose extinguishing Christianity by the Tokugawa Shogunate until the Meiji Restoration in 1868. (I will add one thing here. From 1868 to 1945, the state religion was Shinto. The state power has thus always controlled religions in Japan.)

4. The resistance of Fujyu-Fuse-ha

One sect of Nichiren's followers was called Fujyu-Fuse-ha. Apart from Christians, this sect was the only religious group that was persecuted seriously by the Tokugawa government. The Fujyu-Fuse-ha's case is helpful to the study of the meaning of a civil society in non-Christian world, because the problem of authority was questioned during its struggle, and the freedom of religion put forth a small sprout there.

In 1599 Nichio (1565–1630) opposed the Shogun, Ieyasu Tokugawa, who held absolute power at that time. Ieyasu ordered Nichio to come to the blessing of dedication of a new Buddha statue at Kyoto. But Nichio declined to attend the ceremony because Fujyu-Fuse-ha's confession did not allow this kind of ceremonial participation in other sects. The dictator Ieyasu was angry at Nichio's rejection of his order and punished Nichio, banishing him to a small island. In spite of the government's severe oppression, Nichio's followers increased year by year. Finally the Shogunate government arrested the believers on a large scale in 1691 and imprisoned or killed them.

Almost at the same time in England, successful Glorious Revolution occurred. John Locke came home from the Netherlands and published his *Letters concerning Tolerance* (1689) and *Two Treatises of Government* (1690). Locke wrote that the state should implement a policy of religious tolerance for the nation, in consideration of the oppressed Puritans.

The dispute between Nichio and Ieyasu was similar to that between Locke and the advocates of the Divine Right of Kings. One major issue was "Who is the possessor of the national land?" (legitimacy of reign) While Ieyasu answered,

“The Lord of the nation is”, Nichio answered, “Buddha is.”

Nichio said, “It is Buddha’s grace that we can have heat from heaven and keep our lives nourished by the crops from ground.” Hearing that “all the world belongs to Buddha, and Japan is a part of Buddha’s world” also reminds us of the following Biblical passage, “God made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”(Acts14: 15–17) This grace is called common grace in Christian theology, different from special grace of salvation by faith.

Locke further developed the legitimacy of reign as a political idea instead of a theological idea, which he concretely elaborated in opposition to the Divine Right of Kings in his *Two Treatises*.

The world created by God was entrusted to Adam, the father of all races. Was the authorized right of Adam as a steward of lands, in particular the land of England, inherited by the King of England or by the English people? While the advocate of Divine Right supported the former position, Locke denied it. Locke argued that each person entrusted his natural right to his own possession to a governor through assent and reliance on a social contract. However, on that occasion, freedom of conscience or inner freedom was not entrusted.

Ieyasu ordered the Buddhist monks to come to the celebration of the new Buddha statue. But the monks could clearly deny this order due to their freedom of conscience. Except Nichio, all Buddhist monks including Nichiren’s followers attended the ceremony responding to the Ieyasu’s order, probably to bless the Ieyasu’s dignity and political power. Thus the Nichio’s decision seemed to be rather strange. He was surely an abnormal man, because many Buddhists then thought it was good to subject themselves to the political order. He could accept Ieyasu’s order and just attend the ceremony formally, but actually he did not. It, however, did not come about due to his strange and evil character, but due to his religious conscience. The Lockean doctrine would support this, from which a modern civil society could start. Nichio’s idea and behavior was a global issue at that time; the authority of *the transcendent* is above that of a governor or a

Lord of the state.

5. Shinto and the “absolute other”

A. Ideology of assimilation

The Meiji Restoration closed the Samurai Government and declared the restoration of the Emperor’s Government, which, it was thought, originated with the ancient Jinmu-Emperor, mythical founder of Japan. Its slogan was “Piety to gods and Patriotic mind” under the unification of religion and politics. The Emperor is actually a grand priest and also at the same time worshiped. The basic animistic worldview is rather strengthened, by adding the modern view of the absolutistic state. Sometimes this is called the State Shinto. This gives an ideology of assimilation of **others** in modern imperial Japan, externally for the colonial countries and internally for minorities, Christians, and some Buddhists. These religious people have been oppressed, especially during the Pacific War.

After the War, the institutional separation of Shrine (Church) and State was introduced constitutionally in Japan. This surely intended as a criticism of the abnormal fascism of the State Shinto during the War. This constitutional rule, however, does not necessarily require the so-called liberal ideology, namely, the exclusion of religions from the public realm. The public sphere can include particular religious activities if the governmental institution is not connected to these religious activities. Thus Yasukuni Shrine can exist, but it should be separated from governmental action.

In 1985 the Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone started to practice the so-called **public worship**, but, after receiving strong objection nationally and internationally, he quickly stopped. Koizumi is the second Prime Minister who is eager to maintain such **public worship**.

B. The Alternative

The NMMP, the alternative to Yasukuni Shrine, is proposed in the government’s report last December, which will be summarized as follows,

- (1). The permanent NMMP is necessary, but its form, place, and other

details are not fixed in this moment.

- (2). This is a good chance to show to the world that Japan is sincerely acting to pursue peace.
- (3). The persons mourned are limited to those who died in the wars after Meiji Restoration and in the peace-keeping activities in future.
- (4). The new NMMP can co-exist with already established places.
- (5). Suggestions for the name of NMMP will be solicited from the public.

This is the governmental plan. But, from our side as citizens, we can propose a new NMMP, which includes the memory of all people who participated in the Japanese fascism during the last War. The government, the citizen in general and religious people can talk about this type of NMMP and should try to reach a certain consensus. All the people inside and outside the nation can use this NMMP, irrespective of their faiths and beliefs. It is not a private voluntary institution and, therefore, should be run and kept by public money or tax, just as national parks. It is thought to be a kind of welfare done by the state. Some people including even Japanese Christians object to it, because, in their opinions, the state will control the dead people through this memorial monument and the meaning of death should not be determined by the state. Such kind of thinking is, in my opinion, very much trapped by the religiosity of ancestor worship being popular in Japan. But it is actually true that all kinds of religious people and non-religious people can access this memorial monument in their own ways. The government only offers the place and its management. Though the governmental officers with the religiosity of ancestor worship can have their ceremonies here, it is not a Shinto-shrine. We cannot enter inside their mourning mentality. If we have the **sense of otherness** to the governmental people, we can have the tolerance to their actions.

I think the above-mentioned idea is one of **responsibility for others** that Japanese public philosophy can offer to people trapped by the Japanese type of assimilation. The new *Neue Wache* in Germany (1993) could be one model of this problem.

6. Sovereignty; Not restricted to the state

Let us consider the foundation of a civil society from a religious perspective. Nichio committed himself to Buddhism. Usually Buddhism is considered to be a religion that is immanent instead of transcendent. But if you see Nichio's behavior, you cannot deny that it is surely a result of a transcendent thought. From a religio-social aspect Buddhism here functions as transcendent, because the authority of Buddha is higher than that of a governor. This is why Nichio could resist the authority of the dictatorial governor. Instead of authority, perhaps, sovereignty will be a preferable term for developing a public philosophy underlying a civil society.

Sovereignty was originally a theological idea introduced by Jean Calvin (1509–64). Only the Creator God has sovereignty, and no creature can have it. But in the history of Western Europe, in the process of emergence of Modern society from the Middle Ages, Jean Bodin used the idea of sovereignty to found the Absolute state (1576), where a monarch could have sovereignty. Huguenot, Dutch Calvinists, and Puritans were strongly against this monarchical theory, because a King was no more than a creature.

They thought that a King or a state Governor could not have sovereignty. This led to the idea of *Monarchomachi*, i.e., the idea that a bad ruler with an unjust absolute power should be banished. The concept of sovereignty was inclined to mean the political power from top to down. Instead of this type of top-down thinking, Johannes Althusius stressed human *sympiosis* in bottom-up thinking in *Politica* (1610). Herman Dooyeweerd cited a passage from the Althusius' *Politica* in the following way,

Every type of social relationships has its proper laws peculiar to it, whereby it is ruled. And these laws are different and divergent in each kind of social relationship, according to the requirement of the inner nature of each of them. (*A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*. III: 653)

Dooyeweerd sees that the inner natures of various types of symbiotic social

relationships give the principle of internal sphere sovereignty (sovereignty in its own sphere). Private voluntary associations are illustrations of these symbiotic social relations. A voluntary association is made from each people's bottom-up vital need without compulsion by the state, and therefore has internal sphere sovereignty. The vital need may be sometimes biological and sometimes ethical; both needs are interpreted to be proper laws that are peculiar to human being. These proper laws can either be called immanent because of their bottom-up nature, or transcendent when seen as the creational orders.

Due to the fact that these proper laws in our lives are not reducible to other laws, we can say that each voluntary association has sphere sovereignty. Thus sovereignty does not only belong to the state, but also to various private voluntary associations, sometimes crossing over national boundaries. Between the private individual and the state, there should be a number of intermediate voluntary associations with their own sphere sovereignties such as NGO's and other public sectors according to their need of lives. This intermediate sphere is the authentic public sphere, so to speak, constructed by citizens. The role of state is to protect these sphere sovereignties by making laws and sometimes to make conditions of subsidiary for *symbiosis* or co-existence in order to provide an external welfare to nations, including the place such as NMMP.

The civil society thus considered is essentially transcendental and immanent. First, each people's bottom-up vital need emerges from the fact that they listen to their inner voice or inner authority regardless of other outer human authorities. Second, the proper laws are not human devices, but are given, either as immanent or as transcendent, by the cosmic Buddha's laws or by God's creational laws, respectively. For the naturalists, they are given by Nature! Third, the purposes of the voluntary associations are the fulfillment of public happiness and peace, which is the manifestation of love to neighbors or the mercy of brotherhood. This kind of ethos should be fostered by each society according to its tradition.

7. Conclusion

As I already said in the beginning of this paper, Levinas frequently pointed

out the origin of assimilation in Western thought in the Greek ontology. Although Judeo-Christian religion is originally different from such a rational thinking, it has been actually influenced, however, with this way of thinking for a longtime. The result has been deism, which gives no rooms for a personal response like “I and thou.” Since there are no rooms for “you”, the sameness of you and I are manifest and the concept of **others** will disappear. This, when combined with a political power, gave birth to the pathologies of totalitarianism.

On the other hand, in Japan, pantheism such as Shinto animism has a tendency to include softly all kind of thoughts. The result is “no-difference of subject and object” (Nishida), which gives again the sameness of you and I, and the concept of **others** will disappear. Rejection of different or foreign people from one group becomes manifest in daily lives. It is also the origin of myth claiming that Japan is composed of one folk. If it is combined with a ruling power, the result is clear, namely, a form of totalitarianism. Unfortunately we drastically experienced it during the last War.

Thus, in my opinion, the sense of “I and thou” grounded by the transcendent should not be excluded from the public sphere in order to keep a healthy civil society, though the separation of shrine (church/temple) and state should be rigorously held.